

State of Michigan

Communications in Exercise



MICHIGAN STATE POLICE
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY DIVISION

Carly Georgopoulos, February 20, 2019

Introduction

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Exercise Purpose

- Examine roles, responsibilities, authorities, and capabilities.
- Test plans and procedures.
- Identify items for improvement.
- Confirm areas of strength to continue or improve upon.



HSEEP

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) is a capabilities and performance-based exercise program that provides a standardized methodology in and terminology for exercise design, development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. HSEEP exercises are sizable and scalable for the jurisdiction's needs.



Exercise Cycle

- Design and Development:
 - Design Team
 - Exercise Participants
 - Scope, Objectives, Scenario
- Conduct:
 - Exercise Documents (Exercise Plan, Situation Manual)
 - Simulation Cell
 - Master Scenario Events List (MESL)
- Evaluation:
 - Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEG)
- Improvement Planning:
 - After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)

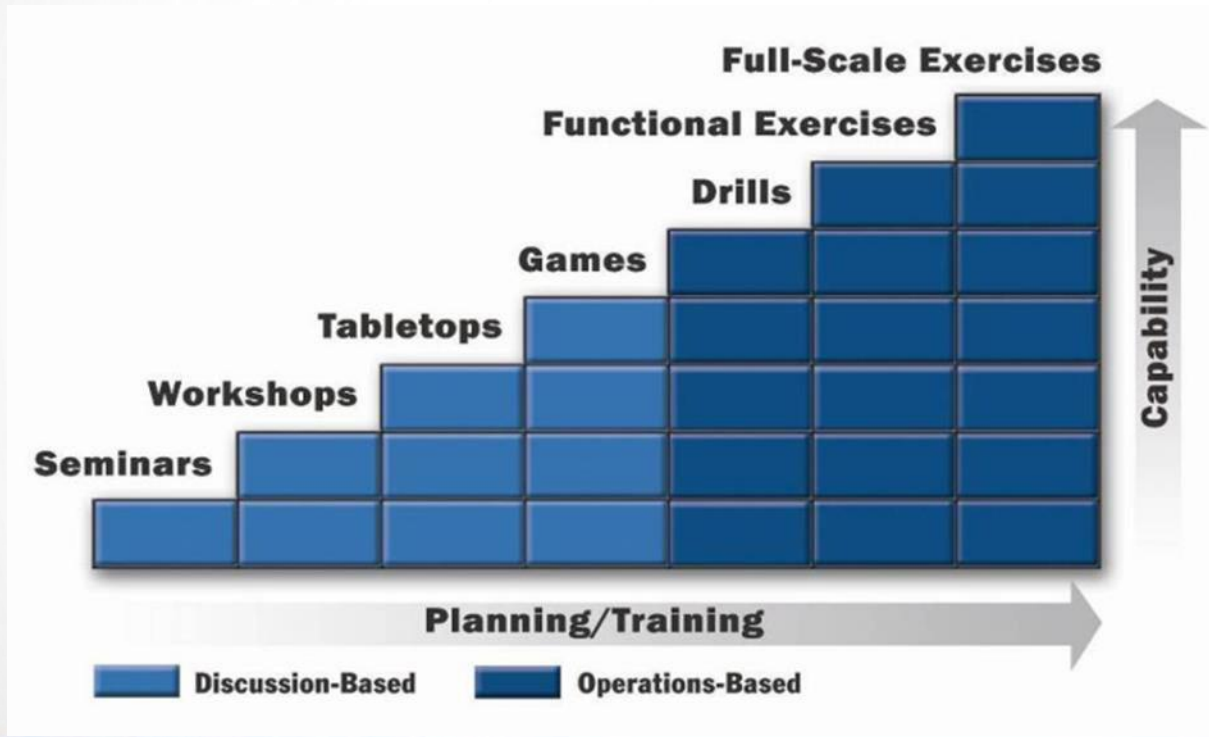


Exercise Types

- Discussion Based:
 - Ideal to help familiarize participants with plans, policies, procedures, and/or agreements.
 - Allows participants to contemplate/practice their response approach in a static environment.
 - Encourages different perspectives and information sharing.
- Operations Based:
 - Ideal to validate plans, policies, procedures, and/or agreements in a dynamic environment.
 - Allows participants to test their response approach under realistic but still simulated conditions.



Building Block Approach



Determine Exercise Objectives

What is the foundation or purpose for the exercise?

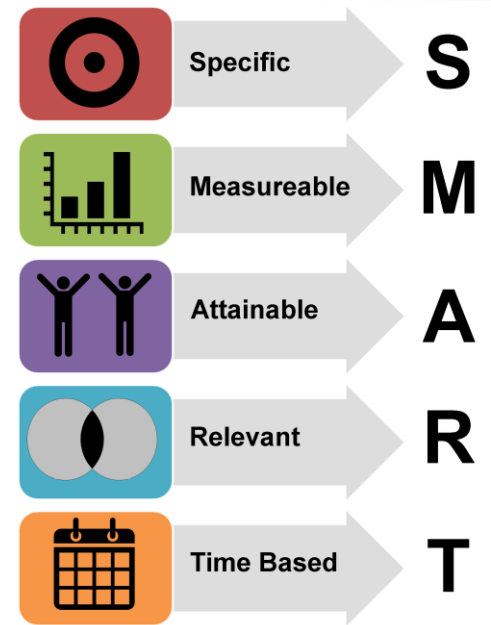
- Identified likely threats and hazards
- Risk assessments
- Plan updates
- Previous incidents/areas for improvement
- Previous exercises
- New staff/equipment/processes
- Required for funding



Determine Exercise Objectives

Objectives should:

- Be “SMART”
- Actionable
- Achievable
- **Who** is the subject of the evaluation?
- **What** (activity or function) performance will be evaluated, or what is desired outcome?
- **Condition(s)** under which performance is to occur.
- **Standard** against which performance will be evaluated.



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Core Capabilities

- Capabilities-based planning takes an all-hazards approach to build capabilities that apply to a wide variety of incidents.
- The National Preparedness Goal outlines these areas into 32 Core Capabilities.
- Communication elements often appear in these capabilities:
 - Public information and Warning
 - Operational Coordination
 - Operational Communications
 - Planning



Public Information and Warning

What do these have in common?

- Television
- Radio
- Email
- Social Media
- Text Messaging
- Web-based applications (MI CIMS)

- (Hint: POWER)

What to do when normal processes fail:

- Print
- 800 MHz
- AuxComm
- Physical “Runners”
- Others?



Operational Coordination

- The right people; enough people involved.
- Working together:
 - Sharing information with all stakeholders.
 - Not in silos.
- Obtaining resources:
 - Locally
 - State
 - Federal
- Exercise with mutual aid partners, customers, suppliers, and service providers.



Operational Communication

- Ensure:
 - Timely communications with the correct audience.
 - Situational awareness for all stakeholders.
 - Maintain communications in the event of damage to or destruction of the primary infrastructure.
- ... **by any and all means available**, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.



Planning

- Exercises can identify areas for improvement for:
 - Emergency Operations Plans (EOP)
 - Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans
 - Continuity of Government (COG)
 - Contact Lists
 - Job Aids
 - Training Plans
 - Other Ideas?



Planning

- Establishing a planning team:
 - Subject Matter Experts
 - Key Stakeholders
 - Lead Simulator
 - Lead Controller
 - Lead Evaluator
- Planning team members are trusted agents:
 - “Blue Players”
 - “White Players”



Planning – things to consider

- **Players:**
 - Having the “right” people in the room rather than “everyone” in the room.
 - Pre-exercise information
 - Player briefings
 - Lead up information; simulated news articles as a warm start.
- **Evaluators**
 - Clear expectations on what details you would like captured.
- **Simulators:**
 - Helpful to have subject matter experts.
 - Ensure they are aware of your exercise objectives.



Communications to Test

- What to test?
 - Back-up Plans
 - Back-up Systems
 - Back-up Personnel
 - Communication Degradation
 - Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan
 - Storm Plans
- Locations to include:
 - Dispatch
 - Emergency Operations Centers
 - External Media Partners



Scenario Development

- Scenario should be:
 - Realistic
 - Plausible
 - Challenging
- Scenario should contain:
 - General context (“story”).
 - Conditions which allow players to work towards meeting objectives.
 - Technical details necessary but not overwhelming.
- Advise players to focus on the response, not “how we got here” – time jumps and assumptions may be necessary to keep the exercise moving.



Tabletop Exercise (TTX) Discussion Questions

Provide questions to facilitate discussion and to address exercise goals.

Examples:

1. At what point, if any, do you stop operations and close down until power is restored?
2. Do you currently have plans/procedures in place that address a long-term power outage?
3. Would you have any security issues at this point?
4. What are your options for communication if cellular phones and Internet are unavailable?
5. What local, state, federal, and private sector resources would you look to procure?
(Who would you work with to procure these resources?)



Evaluations/After-Action Report/Improvement Planning

- Assign evaluators to capture strengths and areas for improvement.
 - Utilize Exercise Evaluation Guides (EEG).
 - Root Cause Analysis
- After-Action Report (AAR)/Improvement Plan (IP):
 - Written report of relevant exercise findings.
 - Comprehensive analysis of successes and gaps including recommendations.
 - Develop a matrix of identified gaps, recommendations, assigned individuals/agencies, and timeline for correction.



Evaluations/After-Action Report/ Improvement Planning (cont.)

- Conduct AAR meeting with planning team to de-conflict findings.
- Assignment meetings with people responsible for IP.
- Track and test improvements in next exercise cycle.



Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

April 2019 – Benton Harbor

July 2019 – Flint

Monthly Webinar Series



Upcoming Exercises

Statewide Exercise 2020

- Overview
 - April 2020
 - Statewide flooding scenario
 - National Exercise Program
 - Vigilant Guard
 - FEMA Region V
- Participation Opportunities
 - Local EOCs – activation level full or partial
 - Private sector – injects to foster discussion
 - Planning team, evaluation, PEM recertification opportunities
 - TTX or Full Scale Exercise (FSE)



Future Exercises

- Take web applications offline:
 - MI CIMS
 - Email
 - Other applications
 - Critical software?
- Turn off cellular phones for exercise use.
- Encourage the use of PACE as events unfold.

PPrimary



Alternate



Contingent



Emergency



Next Steps Exercise

- Conversations
 - “What if...”
- COOP Plan Training/Updates
 - Does your organization have a plan?
 - When was the last time it was exercised?
- Exercise Ideas:
 - Threats and hazards facing your organization.
 - Real world events?
 - Objectives
 - Scenario



Thank you!

Contact Information

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